



A View from "The Edge"

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world." John Muir

Editors
Mary Ellen Bard
Jocelyn A. Sauter

2013 Family Days

The 13th Annual Family Days sponsored by the Cambria County Conservation District was held on July 17th and 18th at Disaster's Edge in the 1889 Park, St. Michael, PA. While those two days were two of the hottest this summer, we didn't let the heat keep us from having a great time! This year we hosted 262 people at our Family Days event. We want to thank our wonderful presenters and all of the children, parents, grandparents, and everyone in between. All of you helped to make this year another great success. We appreciate the time you took to give us your feedback. We received so many wonderful ideas and suggestions and we can't wait to start planning next year's event!

Day One

"Thank you! We had a wonderful and educational day!"

Ag Lab: The Mobile Ag Lab traveled to Family Days to teach everyone about the importance of agriculture. On the first day, the Ag Lab team educated children and adults on the soybean, or "the colorful bean." First, everyone learned about soybeans and how they are used to make many products we use daily. Next, all the students performed a scientific experiment to see whether the petroleum or soy based crayon performed better. After the results were in, most people agreed that the soy based crayon was the best. Everyone went home with a homemade soybean crayon!



AMD Mysteries: Melissa Reckner from the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team joined us to talk about the negative effects of Acid Mine Drainage on our environment. Reckner told us that the iron oxide, which comes from mining discharge, is bad for aquatic life and habitat—it coats the gills of fish and their food sources. She also told us that resource recovery efforts are finding ways to remove the iron oxide from water sources and use it to make make-up, dyes, paint, etc. Children used the iron oxide to create awesome tie-dyed shirts and bandanas!

Tales from the Mine: Volunteers, Barb & Barry Boring, led an informative session on the history of coal mining in our area. After a short film, which highlighted the dangers and manual labors of coal mining, Barry shared stories of his personal experiences with coal mining. One particular tale of a sneaky, cookie stealing rat had everyone giggling. Barb sang a beautiful song she had written about being a coal miner's wife. And everyone created a drawing with pieces of coal.



Shaver's Creek: Live animals are always a hit at Family Days. This year was no exception as we welcomed Shaver's Creek and their "Owls Around Us" program for our special session. We were able to see a Barred Owl, a Barn Owl, and a Great Horned Owl. Shaver's Creek also brought a Red Tailed Hawk to show us the difference between the birds of prey. We learned that the color of an owl's eyes can tell us if the bird hunts for food during the day or night and how their light feathers make it possible for owls to have nearly silent flight!

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Special Dates to Remember

Sep 1-7:	Cambria County Fair
Sep 2:	Office Closed, Holiday
Sep 5:	Board Meeting, 10 am
Oct 4:	Board Meeting, 11 am & Legislative Lunch, 12:15 pm
Oct 29:	Breakfast Meeting, 7:30 am
Nov 7:	Board Meeting, 10 am
Nov 11, 28, 29:	Office Closed, Holidays

Meet the Staff

*Each issue we'll introduce you to the wonderful people who serve the Conservation District.
Today, meet our
District Manager*

Robert W. Piper, Jr District Manager



Robb was hired as the first erosion control technician and became the first assistant manager for the District. He became manager in 1996. Under him the County Geographic Information Center for Cambria County was established in 1999. He chairs the Dirt & Gravel Roads County Quality Assurance Board (1998); The Southern Alleghenies RC&D Council (2006) and serves as a board member on the South Alleghenies Conservancy, Cambria & Somerset Counties Conservancy-Treasurer, PA Forestry Association-Vice President, Jackson Township Water Authority-Vice Chair, and Johnstown Sportsman's Association. Robb is president of the Johnstown Rifle & Pistol Club and secretary of the Cambria County Federation of Sportsman's Clubs. In 2010 Governor Rendell appointed

Robb to the statewide Water Resource Committee which is charged with implementing Act 220/State Water Resources Planning Act of 2002. Robb graduated from Penn State University with a Bachelor of Science in Forest Science. Robb resides with his wife, Pam, in Jackson Township.

Conservation District Picnic



*Elaine Ritchey, Dee Dumm, Robb Piper, John Dryzal,
Chuck Kubasik, James Kennedy, Claire Ann Dumm,
Clair Dumm, and Bob Ritchey*

On Thursday, August 1, after the evening Board of Directors Meeting the District hosted our annual picnic at Disaster's Edge Environmental Education Center in the 1889 Park in St. Michael, PA. Despite threats of showers, the weather was perfect for a picnic and the company was great. Staff, Directors, Associate Directors and their families came to enjoy lovely conversation and delicious food catered by Capri Pizza of Johnstown. Fifty guests attended, including Director Commissioner Chernisky, Department of Agriculture Western PA Regional Director James Kennedy, USDA-NRCS and DEP Staff, and members of the Adams-Croyle Township Recreation Authority.

Everyone in attendance had the opportunity to explore the nature trails and visit the Miner's Museum. The Disasters Edge Educational Facility was open to anyone who wanted to see the facility and our variety of live and mounted animals.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make our picnic an enjoyable evening! A special thank you is extended to the 2013 Dairy Princess, Dawn Craft. After delivering an informative presentation about ice cream, she and her sisters dished up frosty bowls of ice cream sundaes for a refreshing dessert!

AmeriCorps and Intern Comings and Goings

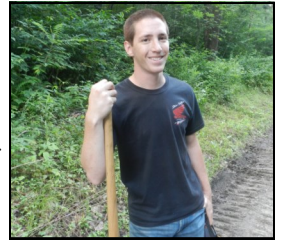
In August, the Conservation District said good-bye to one of our AmeriCorps members, Nathan Marsh. Nate worked as our Environmental Education Specialist working with Jackie Ritko to coordinate and direct education programs for local schools and organizations. Nathan was also responsible for monitoring the dataloggers in Cambria and Somerset Counties. We wish Nate the best of luck as he moves forward in his career.



Nate works with a student on a tree identification program.

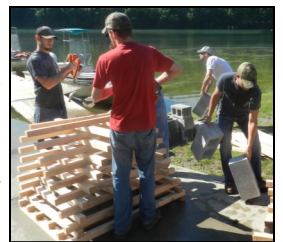
The District welcomes back Jocelyn Sauter for another AmeriCorps term. Jocelyn will step into the role as the Environmental Education Specialist, performing the tasks previously handled by Nathan Marsh. Jocelyn will also continue her work handling media coverage, the publication of the quarterly newsletters and Annual Report, and assisting with the coordination of events such as Family Days, the Legislative Luncheon, and the Annual Picnic.

The Conservation District extends sincere congratulations to Nathan and Jocelyn for completing two full one-year terms of service with AmeriCorps. They each put in 3,400 (or more) hours of service through the Conservation District and participation in AmeriCorps sponsored activities, such as CPR Certification and volunteer efforts.



Josh helps with the Patrick Road Rehabilitation Project.

This spring and summer, we were lucky enough to have four interns choose to work with the District. Joshua Schall, an Environmental Engineer major at Saint Francis University; Christopher Shepard, an Environmental Sciences major at Saint Francis University; John Fees, an Environmental Sciences major at University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown; and Dave Fogle, an Environmental Sciences major at University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, were instrumental in the success of many of our spring and summer projects and events. In addition to helping with the execution of general office duties, Josh, Chris, John, and Dave assisted with events such as Family Days, researching a solution for the sewage system in Coupon, working on the Patrick Road Rehabilitation Project, performing water quality monitoring, and assisting with Environmental Education programs. We wish them much success as they work toward finishing their education!



John & Dave assist with the construction of fish habitat structures.

Keep Cambria County Beautiful

FALL 2013 TIRE & APPLIANCE COLLECTION



FALL COLLECTION DATES AND LOCATIONS (8:00 am to 1:00 pm):

Sept. 7, 2013—Tunnelhill Borough: Tunnelhill Borough Municipal Building located at 808 Portage St.

Sept. 21, 2013—Summerhill Township— Take Rt. 869 East to Beaverdale, left onto Irvin St. Township building on left.

Passenger & Lt. Truck Tires*

Off Rim: \$1.00

On Rim: \$2.00

Household Appliances

Freon Containing: \$12.00

Non-Freon Containing: FREE

*Call our office at 472-2120 for pricing on large tires.

Cambria County Recycles

On Tuesday, June 25, 2013 a celebratory presentation was held at the Coca-Cola Ebensburg Distribution Center. The event was held to mark the delivery of 25 recycling bins to the Cambria County Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA) from The Coca-Cola Foundation and Keep America Beautiful.

“This local initiative is part of Coca-Cola’s national Public Space Recycling Bin Grant Program administered by Keep America Beautiful. The program supports local community recycling efforts by providing bins to selected grant recipients for the collection of beverage container recyclables in public settings. The bins serve as a direct incentive for communities to expand recycling programs beyond curbside collection and to capture ‘away-from-home’ materials.” *DeAnn Baxter, Public Affairs & Communications with The Coca-Cola Company.*

Mary Ellen Bard, Conservation District Administrative Assistant, and Jocelyn Sauter, AmeriCorps, attended the event as representatives for the District and Keep Cambria County Beautiful. They brought along a fun game for attendees to play. The game tested everyone’s litter IQ – Do you know how many years it takes for glass to decompose? How about an aluminum can? The Litter IQ game, along with activity booklets and informational posters, aided in delivering Coca-Cola’s message about the importance of recycling and proper disposal of trash.

A dedication ceremony was held featuring brief speeches about the grant program, the need for increased recycling efforts, and the impact recycling has on our community. All those in attendance were offered a tour of the Coca-Cola facility. Those who attended the celebration included Deanne Baxter and Rick Bash, representatives from Coca-Cola; Tom Simmons, representative for Senator John Wozniak; Charles Vizzini, representative for State Representative Frank Burns; Commissioner Chernisky and President Commissioner Lengenfelder; Kris Howdyshell, representative for CCSWA; and Shannon Reiter, representative for Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.



Pictured from left to right: President Commissioner Lengenfelder, Commissioner Chernisky, Rick Bash, Shannon Reiter, Kris Howdyshell, Charles Vizzini, Tom Simmons, and DeAnn Baxter

Come Visit Us!



**Come check out the District’s booth at the
CAMBRIA COUNTY FAIR
September 1 to 7, 2013 “Always Labor Day Week”**

Learn about Lyme Disease and how you can prevent it
from affecting you and your loved ones.

Register to win a Wildlife Box!

Get information on upcoming Conservation District events.

Kids can play a fun, educational game about recycling!

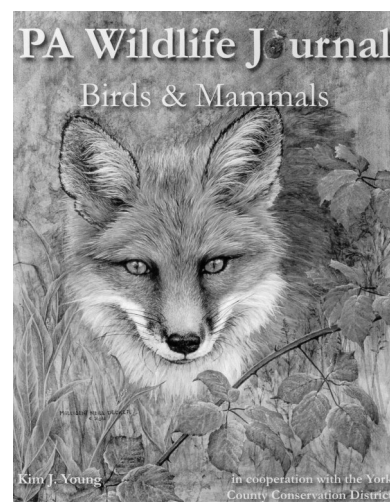
Find out where you can get local, fresh produce.

PA Wildlife Journal

The **PA Wildlife Journal** is a 300-page reference book on Pennsylvania's birds and mammals. It is highlighted with professional artwork and photographs and features illustrations from hundreds of students across Pennsylvania and the United States.

This beautiful book will be available for purchase at our booth at the Cambria County Fair. You can also order your very own copy by calling our office at 472-2120. The cost is \$30. Additional shipping charges apply if home delivery is requested.

A percentage of the proceeds will benefit the environmental education programs of the Cambria County Conservation District.



Environmental Programs



In School Programs—\$2.00/person
Programs at Disaster's Edge—\$1.00/person

The District offers Environmental Education programs for area Schools, Scouts Troops, and Clubs at a minimal cost. Programs can be brought to you or you can come to our Environmental Education Center in St. Michael. Here is a sampling of the education curriculum currently being offered.

Who's Clues – Students will learn to use their senses to explore the outdoors by listening and looking for clues (tracks, scat, nests, and burrows) that the animals leave behind. (Edge)

4.3 Environmental Health; 4.6 Ecosystems and their Interactions; 4.7 Threatened, Endangered and Extinct Species; 4.8 Humans & the Environment.

Amphibians & Reptiles – Students will be introduced to the life cycle of local amphibians and reptiles; and learn how they survive the long cold winters in Pennsylvania. Live animals are featured. (Edge or Classroom)

4.1 Watersheds & Wetlands; 4.3 Environmental Health; 4.5 Integrated Pest Management; 4.6 Ecosystems and their Interactions; 4.7 Threatened, Endangered and Extinct Species.

Wetland Ecology—Students tour a local wetland as they learn about the characteristics and function of wetlands and the important role they play for wildlife and humans. (Edge)

4.1 Watersheds & Wetlands; 4.2 Renewable and nonrenewable Resources; 4.3 Environmental Health; 4.6 Ecosystems and their Interactions

Birds of a Feather— We'll investigate bird habitats, adaptations, and the mysteries of migration. (Edge or in classroom).

4.3 Environmental Health; 4.6 Ecosystems and their Interactions; 4.7 Threatened, Endangered and Extinct Species, 4.8 Humans and the Environment.

Go Green with Trees—Students learn the effects of trees on the ecosystem, learn how to identify tree species, and determine the stage of succession of a woodland or forest. (Edge).

4.2 Renewable and nonrenewable Resources; 4.3 Environmental Health; 4.4 Agriculture and Society; 4.6 Ecosystems and their Interactions; 4.7 Threatened, Endangered and Extinct Species; 4.8 Humans and the Environment.

Seeds & Frogs—Students investigate the life cycles of plants and animals, recycle a plastic bottle to create a miniature terrarium, and observe the various stages of tadpole development (Edge or Classroom)

4.1 Watershed & Wetlands; 4.3 Environmental Health; 4.4 Agriculture and Society; 4.6 Ecosystems and their Interactions; 4.7 Threatened, Endangered and Extinct Species.

Dirt...you got to Dig It—Students learn the secrets of soil composition, percolation and the effects these qualities play on the local ecosystem. (Edge or outdoor classroom area at school).

4.3 Environmental Health; 4.4 Agriculture and society; 4.6 Ecosystems and their Interactions; 4.8 Humans and the Environment.

NOTE: We can design a program which fits your needs, and is aligned with PDE Environment & Ecology Standards. All activities are geared toward the age and skill level of our participants. Please call our Education staff for more information.

District Office (814) 472-2120

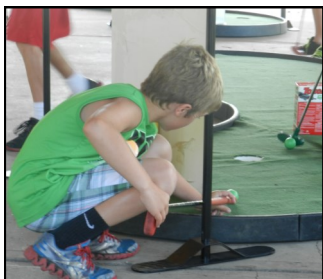
Disaster's Edge (814) 495-4380 or 243-5069

Family Days (cont.)

Day Two

"So Cool! Thank you for two days of fun!"

Ag Lab: The Ag Lab was back again, this time with a few questions about where the fruit we eat comes from. After participating in a question and answer session, everyone learned that fruits come from flowers and are able to grow thanks to the pollination done by bees! The campers made a bookmark with a 3-D flower on it. Before saying good-bye to the Ag Lab, everyone played a fun game where the campers and adults transformed into bees and a field of flowers. The bees flew from flower to flower, pollinating as they went.



Rodent Round-Up: Because the mobile mini-golf unit was such a hit last year, we brought it back! The Penn State Department of Agriculture loaned us the unique educational tool, which taught our mini-golfers all about rodents. While these critters might look cute, you don't want them running around your house. As the golfers moved from hole-to-hole, each person learned about why rodents are unwanted pests, how rodents can be controlled, and how to safely use the different methods of control. When they weren't golfing, the children headed over to Disaster's Edge to see and learn about our live critters—birds, gerbils, turtles, and even a snake!

Can You Dig It?: In this new addition to Family Days, our campers met Paula Zitzler, an archaeologist from Penn State. Paula taught us that being an archaeologist is a lot like being a detective. Archaeologists solve the mysteries of our past by discovering clues and studying artifacts. Paula shared some of her special artifacts with our campers and together they became archaeologists for a day and studied the clues to figure out what the items were, when they were made, how they were used, and what they could tell us about the people who used them.



Animal Tracks: Our final program of Family Days had many kids (and adults) squealing! Chenoa, owner of Animal Tracks, brought some of her most prized pets to share with our group. Some lucky, not to mention brave, volunteers were able to touch and hold some of them, including the Ball Python, her Bearded Dragon, a Walking Stick Bug, and a pair of Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches! Chenoa gave detailed explanations about all of her pets and she walked around with each of them so everyone could get a look up close!

"We loved everything. Already looking forward to next year!"



We are so appreciative to all presenters and volunteers for sharing their time and expertise, helping to make Family Days the fun-filled, affordable, and educational event it has become.

We want to thank the 2013 Dairy Princess, Dawn Craft, for stopping by both days to meet the campers and give them a delicious ice cream treat! Thank you to our District Staff, AmeriCorps members, Interns, and volunteers for making these two days the best days of summer. We especially want to thank the following businesses for their generous donations:



Check out our Facebook page to see more Family Days pictures!

Cambria County Senior Environment Corps



Are you 55 years or older, live in Cambria County and want to become involved in protecting our resources and educating the public on the natural world? If so, the new Cambria County Senior Environment Corps wants you.

The Cambria County Conservation District and Nature Abounds, a national non-profit and organizer of the Senior Environment Corps, are working together to get the new group up and running. Members can participate in a variety of tasks from monitoring water-quality, observing and reporting on wildlife, and even helping with office tasks. The possibilities are endless.

According to Nature Abounds President, Melinda Hughes-Wert, “We’re thrilled that Cambria County will have a new Senior Environment Corps (SEC). There has been SEC groups in surrounding counties for quite some time – Indiana, Blair, and Clearfield - so it’s time for Cambria to have one too.”

Hughes-Wert continued, “Senior Environment Corps members have monitored water quality, helped to inventory wildlife, marked abandoned oil wells and educated the next generation of environmental stewards. Since 1997, SEC volunteers in Pennsylvania have contributed over 2,000,000 hours to the Commonwealth’s environment, and that contribution is estimated to be valued at over \$3,000,000 a year. In 2013, the SEC program won a Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award.”

Robb Piper, Manager of the Cambria County Conservation District said, “The Board of Directors is looking forward to engaging new senior resources for conservation in Cambria County.”

The first project of the new Cambria County Senior Environment Corps will be water quality monitoring. The training for the project will take place on September 24th, and will last approximately five hours.

For more information about volunteering with the Cambria County Senior Environment Corps, please contact the Cambria County RSVP office at (814) 539-4511 or the Cambria County Conservation District at (814) 472-2120.

For more information about the Senior Environment Corps program or Nature Abounds, please contact Melinda Hughes-Wert of Nature Abounds at either 814-765-1453 or at sec@natureabounds.org. Nature Abounds is bringing people together for a healthy environment.



Contact Information:

Melinda Hughes-Wert

Nature Abounds

814-765-1453/media@natureabounds.org



401 Candlelight Drive
Suite 229
Ebensburg, PA 15931

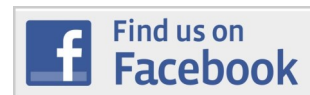
Phone: (814) 472-2120
Fax: (814) 472-0686
Email: cccd@co.cambria.pa.us

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Return Service Requested

- *If you wish to be added or removed from our mailing list, please contact the Cambria County Conservation District office at (814) 472-2120.*
- *If you would like to help conserve resources and receive your newsletter via email, send your email address to jsauter@co.cambria.pa.us*
- *Help us get the word out—"like" us on Facebook and ask your friends to do the same!*

www.co.cambria.pa.us/conservation
and



Where is Disaster's Edge Environmental Education Center?

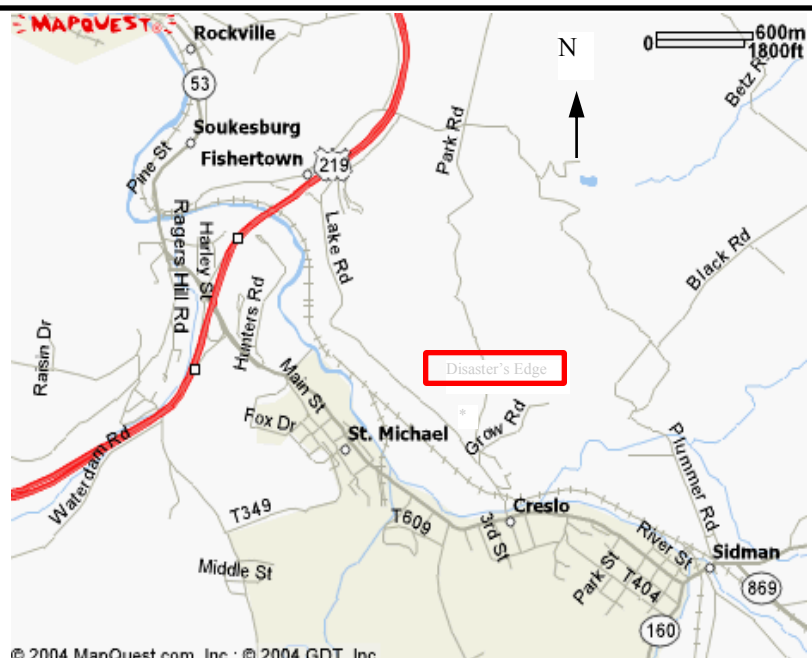
Take Route 219 North/South to the Sidman/St. Michael exit. At the bottom of the ramp, turn onto Route 869 toward Sidman and the Johnstown Flood National Memorial. Travel approximately 3 miles. Turn left onto Lake Road, traveling over the bridge then over the railroad tracks and entering the 1889 Park. Disaster's Edge Environmental Education Center will be on the right across from the baseball field and the coal miners museum.

Call Jackie Ritko at the Cambria County Conservation District Office to schedule programs or to discuss events.

**138 Park Road
St. Michael, PA 15951**

Mission Statement

The Cambria County Conservation District educates and assists the public through programs, projects, and leadership in the stewardship of natural resources to sustain and enhance the quality of life.



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Road Map to The Disasters Edge Environmental Education Center.